

EDUCATION WORK GROUP

MEETING MINUTES

January 24, 2013

Conference Room 3, Patrick Henry Building
1111 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia

Members Present:

- **The Honorable Laura Fornash (Chair)**
- **Peter Blake**
- **Dr. Scott Brabrand**
- **Lee Brannon**
- **Joel Branscom**
- **Michael Cline**
- **Steve Cover**
- **Jeff Ellick**
- **Dr. Rachel Foglesong**
- **Sarah Gross**
- **Meg Gruber**
- **Brian Hieatt**
- **Allen Hill**
- **Dr. Charles J. Klink**
- **Dr. Judi M. Lynch**
- **Dr. Keith Perrigan**
- **Alexa Rennie**
- **Dianne Smith**
- **Steve Staples**
- **Leonard Stewart, Jr.**
- **Josie Webster**
- **Patricia Wright**
- **Angela Ciolfi**

Members Absent:

- **The Honorable Tom Garrett**
- **Regina Blackwell Brown**

Staff Present:

- **Joann Burkholder**
- **Dr. Cynthia Cave**
- **Mary Savage**
- **Diane Vermaaten**
- **Larry Wilder**

Legal Counsel Present

- **Kay Heidbreder , Office of the Attorney General**
- **Noelle Shaw-Bell, Office of the Attorney General**

CALL TO ORDER**Sec. Laura Fornash, Chair**

Sec. Fornash called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 AM.

Adoption of the Minutes: The minutes from the 1st meeting of the workgroup were adopted with one correction.

Presentation: Donna Michaelis, Virginia Center for School Safety, Department of Criminal Justice Services presented on the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program.

- SROs are certified law enforcement officers. They are fully sworn to provide law enforcement and security to K-12. The program was established through § 9.1-110.
- School Resource Officer Grants Program and Fund: grant funds have been spent primarily on middle and high school. SROs do not serve as perimeter defense. Their purpose is to provide law and order in the building.
- If the SRO position in a school has been created through grant funding, training is required and provided by DCJS. If the SRO hired directly by school, the SRO is not required to do training.
- Law enforcement officers have been highly trained to complete the SRO function. The officers are usually at the school by choice and have a passion to be there. Unfortunately, funds for the program are no longer available at state level. The federal government still provides \$1.2 million in funding for the program.
- The SRO grant program is one of the best received programs. Strong relationships between the schools and their officers have resulted from the program and those relationships often continue beyond availability of grant funds.
- DCJS training for SROs was developed with consideration of adolescent behavior and development. Standard SRO training includes 8 hours dedicated to law; 8 hours to crisis management; 8 hours to youth culture; and 8 hours floating on topical issues. Autism in schools has been added recently.
- While SROs are law enforcement school-based employees reporting to their captain, School Security Officers (SSO) are school based employees under the direction of the principal. SSOs operate under school rules and school law. The School Security Officer program is a certified program. SSOs are required to renew their certification every two years.
- The preliminary results for the 2012 School Safety Audit are available on Governor's website. There are 513 SROs in Virginia's schools. Some of the SROs are part-time. However, when law enforcement was asked to respond to a telephone survey, they indicated that there were 400 SROS in Virginia's schools, so there is some discrepancy.
- We have 94% saturation of SROs in our middle schools and high schools—primarily located in urban and suburban areas. Elementary schools have 24% saturation.
- The DCJS offers four SRO training academies each year offered. The SRO and SSO training is combined since they are required to work together. DCJS trains approximately 200-250 SROs each year. There is a good deal of turnover because the SROs move on or get promoted.

- DCJS offers several other training modules throughout year. These supplemental training modules are most often accessed at the request of the principal.
- DCJS's Center for School Safety works to bring schools and law enforcement together. SROs are required to have 40 hours in service. In Virginia SSOs are not permitted to carry firearms.
- Chesterfield is one county where there is an SRO in both the middle schools and the high schools. Elementary schools most often have School Safety Officer.
- SROs must have excellent communication skills to deal with all the moving parts, principal, parents, staff, and students.
- It costs approximately \$12,000 to \$15,000 to run a basic training academy for SROs. DCJS does offer scholarships to folks that do not have the money to travel to the academy. The class size is approximately 50 trainees.
- The School and law enforcement are encouraged to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This agreement must take place at a very high level. The symbiosis of that relationship is crucial. DCJS does have a program guide available but the guide needs to be revisited and updated. The guide does provide models for use by the school.
- DCJS asks that the officer be on the street for 3-5 years and have some juvenile experience prior to being considered for an SRO position. DCJS prefers that school staff be on the interview panel.

Discussion of presentation:

Should elementary schools have an SRO? Putting an SRO in an elementary school could be a matter of economics. Taking into consideration the expense of an SRO's salary, car, and training, the cost of an SRO is about \$100,000. Not to mention that you are putting a highly trained individual in the elementary school. In some cases a perimeter solution ~~is~~ may be best (for an elementary school). The decision may have to be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Since a principal is not required in every school it may be difficult to assume that an SRO can be placed in every school. Part of what may be needed is simply providing localities with advising on whether or not they should be putting an SRO in their schools.

Discussion of Recommendations for Consideration

Item: School Resource Officers

A biennial review of SRO Curriculum is proposed. The biennial review could incorporate additional components listed in bullet #6 of the recommendation thereby incorporating bullet #1 and bullet #6:

Bullet #1 - Biennial review of the School Resource Officer Curriculum, with consultation among the Virginia Center for School Safety, the Virginia Department of Education, and the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services as to curriculum components.

Bullet #6 - Require training for SROs on (1) adolescent development and psychology; (2) strategies for diffusing potentially volatile situations; (3) recognizing symptoms of trauma and abuse (and related behaviors) in children and adolescents; (4) recognizing manifestations of students' disabilities; (5) evidence-based programs for improving school climate; and (6) the short-term and long-term effects of court involvement on the likelihood of recidivism and disengagement from school

There was subsequent discussion among the members concerning an initial review of what is currently being offered in the SRO curriculum; DCJS determining the best/most appropriate components; a biennial review should be conducted; the correct approach to mandate hours and training for all SROs; whether principals and assistant principals be included in the SRO training; and other related items. There is a gap for elementary school security given the saturation in the middle and high schools. In addition, the impact on private schools should not be forgotten when making recommendations. There's a general feeling that training should be mandated.

Two motions for recommendations resulted from the discussion:

#1 - That the definition of SRO in the Code be amended to include appropriate training as determined by DCJS, in consultation with the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, and that a continuing education be included as a requirement of the position.

#2 - That the state establishes a recurring fund to be made available for use at the discretion of schools and localities for school safety and security.

Item: School Disaster Response Plans

- Some of the recommendation ideas are covered by provisions in the crisis resource guide. The gap listed in bullet # 3 is already mandated. It speaks to response and procedure in the event of intrusion (not specifically active shooter).
- Private schools are not currently mandated but language can be changed as it is part of their accreditation process.
- There is some question as to how frequently and consistently drills are taking place in schools. Some concern was expressed that freshman students may not know the appropriate action to take in the event of an emergency situation.
- The frequency of fire and lock down and evacuation drills (fire and other incidents) is outlined in Board of Education (BOE) regulations. The panel considered a recommendation to include local law enforcement, and other first responders in drills for active shooter and lockdown and to increase the frequency and the timing of the drills.

- The lockdown procedure was instituted to be applicable to any number of incidences. It is a standardized process help kids to know what to do in the event of an incident. You have to be careful of the psychological impact on students when determining how often and what to include in drills as there can be lasting impact.
- At community colleges, there is a course, SDV 100, where provides the vehicle for introducing new students appropriate action to take in the event of an emergency. It is an all hazards approach and may include video instruction.
- Another consideration is the notification of parents when a drill is taking place as that can often create challenges in communication. An effective way to combat communication issues may be to institute a statewide effort similar to the statewide tornado drill day.
- The goal is to inoculate students and faculty, i.e. give them enough practice so that they know what to do when an event arises. There is a longstanding requirement established in code that a fire drill be conducted at specific intervals. Those drills could be expanded to take an all hazards approach. An all hazards approach allows for practice even if the scenarios change.

There was some further consideration given to the fact that there is no requirement that law enforcement and other first responders be included in the drills and whether that should be changed. It was determined that in some cases, the law enforcement may not be able to physically participate but may be able to fill an advisory role.

It was decided that since the determination of the procedure and the participants of the drills fall under the Board of Education regulations that those changes could be discussed and recommendations made at a later date as the most pressing issues for the workgroup are changes to the Code and budget amendments.

One unanimous motion for recommendation resulted from this discussion:

#1 – That § 22.1-137. Fire drills of the Code be amended to refer to an all hazards drill. All hazards should be covered over the course of a year.

Item: Antibullying Policies

- Dr. Cindy Cave provided an overview of the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) study in response to a House Joint Resolution from the 2011 General Assembly of the nature and effectiveness of local school divisions' antibullying policies and the recommendations that stemmed from the study.

- It is noted that there is pending legislation, HB 1871 (McClellan), and SB 951 (Favola), which seeks to change state code to include a definition of bullying.
- There was some question as to why possible recommendations should focus on the VDOE study and not the larger landscape as other issues may be related to the incidence of bullying.
- It was determined that the VDOE provided a vehicle since the study was a result of joint resolution (HJR No. 625, 2011).
- It was acknowledged that there are many other credible, evidence based programs but there should not be a suggestion that one program fits all schools. Schools should be able to use programs that fit their communities and environment. PBIS is one of many evidence based program. This study is a vehicle to provide technical assistance regardless of the program a school chooses.
- Part of the problem is the school divisions are not aware of all the programs that are out there. Bullying is just one part of the type of issues out there. There are many incidence and categories of discipline issues.
- There was some question as to whether SROs be trained in bullying prevention and permitted to bring that information back to the schools. It was concluded that bullying is not currently a crime and that the SROs may not be the right people to bring that information back to the schools and be the expert.

One unanimous motion for one recommendation resulted from this discussion:

To provide funding for the provision of technical assistance and training for school divisions and schools in best policies, practices and procedures for implementing bullying prevention and responding to bullying incidents as recommended in the 2011 VDOE study prepared for the General Assembly.

Item: Higher Education

1. Expand the availability of the Campus Emergency Response Team (CERT)* training to all public higher education institutions in the Commonwealth by providing funding to ensure that institutions can access the training. CERT training is provided by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. (This recommendation is based in part on the assumption that CERT training will include active shooter training.)
2. Funding request be made to update or replace first warning and emergency campus notification systems at public higher education institutions. Additional annual funding for first warning and emergency notification systems will increase timely notifications to college communities and help replace outdated equipment currently being used.

3. To fund existing Crime Prevention and Safety Programs on campuses. Most if not all public Institutions of Higher Education have crime prevention programs and safety programs but often do not have the funding to sustain them. Currently, there are no Department of Criminal Justice Services' Grant Programs that support campus security departments with crime prevention and safety initiatives on campus. Lack of funding puts security departments at a disadvantage as they are unable to obtain much needed equipment. They also lack the resources to establish or continue safety programs on campus. Additional funding would increase the dissemination of crucial information to the college community and enhance communication and safety programs on campus.
- Discussion that fiscal impact statements would be forthcoming but preliminary inquiries to Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) on the cost of CERT training indicated that to provide CERT training requires two trainers at \$20 an hour for approximately 16 hours at a cost of approximately \$640 for instruction. There are additional costs for instructor travel and course materials resulting in an approximate total cost of \$1,000 for the delivery of the CERT course.
 - Discussion that there has also been some discussion that this training may be appropriate for K-12 and therefore the fiscal impact of a broader expansion of CERT training beyond higher education may need to be considered.
 - Discussion that there may be opportunities to mitigate the cost of delivering CERT training to more constituents which could include train the trainer sessions to permit regional training where appropriate. Mr. Cline also indicated that often they are able to recruit local volunteers to provide training which would also help to mitigate costs.

Three unanimous motions for recommendations resulted from the discussion:

1# - That a budget amendment be made to provide funding for the expansion of CERT training to include all public higher education institutions.

2# - That a budget amendment be made to provide funding to update or replace first warning and emergency campus notification systems at public higher education institutions.

3# - That a budget amendment be made to provide funding for existing crime prevention and safety programs on campus and to enable campus security officers to access DCJS training.

Public comment: There was no public comment.

At 12:55PM, Sec. Fornash adjourned the meeting.